



Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo (right) receives the symbolic key to the new Department of Foreign Affairs-Office of Consular Affairs building from Development Bank of the Philippines President Patricia Sto. Tomas. (photo by Tony Bosa, DFA-PISU)

17 February 2010 - Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto G. Romulo said that the realization of a dream came into fruition with the implementation of the ePassport and the turnover of the new Department of Foreign Affairs consular building.

"It is part of our dream for the Filipino people to have a world-class passport and consular services. We have done it through the Machine Readable Passport (MRP) and the ePassport, and now the dream is complete with the new DFA-Office of Consular Affairs (DFA-OCA) building," he said during the building's turnover ceremonies held yesterday morning.



Secretary Romulo (center) with Gawad Mabini awardees and DFA officials (from left) DFA-OCA Principal Assistant Fernando V. Beup, Jr., DFA-Office of the Secretary Special Assistant Florida Ann Camille P. Mayo, DFA Undersecretary for Administration Franklin M. Ebdalin, DFA-OCA Executive Director Eleanor L. Jaucian, Atty. Ray Gatmaytan (receiving the award for his wife, former DFA-OCA Passport Director Donna Celeste F. Gatmaytan and DFA-OCA Assistant Secretary Renato A. Villapando. (photo by Tony Bosa Jr., DFA-PISU)

He added that before, Filipinos had to bear the embarrassment and humiliation of being shunted aside in immigration queues and questioned lengthily on the veracity of their identities and their passports, which caused many delays for the Filipino traveller.

"When we were issuing green passports, other countries were already issuing International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)- compliant passports. It was like being back in the Middle Ages. Now, we are one of the 60 countries now issuing the ICAO-compliant MRP and ePassports," he explained.

Secretary Romulo said that the new consular building completes the fulfillment of the dream.

"In this intelligent building, instead of sweltering heat, our consular clients will be greeted with cool air at the moment they enter our doors. Instead of monobloc chairs, they will wait their turn sitting on ergonomically-designed stainless steel benches. Instead of long queues, they can shorten their wait by accessing our online appointment system. Instead of going from building to building, they only need to move from ground to second floor," he added.

He said that DFA-OCA personnel will also enjoy the convenience of modern work stations, furniture and equipment.

The new building is part of the ongoing modernization program undertaken by Secretary Romulo to further improve the DFA's frontline services which include harnessing new technologies in passport and visa issuances and streamlined procedures in the authentication of documents.

"Now, we have a passport and a consular building that is efficient, progressive and serviceable, and will give every Filipino ease, comfort and pride. With everyone's support, the Filipino can be truly world-class," Secretary Romulo added.

Also present during the turnover ceremonies were Development Bank of the Philippines President Patricia Sto. Tomas; Mr. John Kenneth Ocampo, owner and contractor of the building; representatives from the diplomatic and consular corps and other government agencies; and DFA officials.

DFA Realizes Dream in New Consular Building – Secretary Romulo

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Secretary Romulo (center) and DFA officials pose with those given citations (from left) DFA Undersecretary for Administration Franklin M. Ebdalin, DPWH Engineers Lamberto Bonifacio, Bayani G. David, building contractor and owner John Kenneth L. Ocampo, DFA-OCA Authentication Director Luzviminda L. Van Opstal, DFA-OCA Consular Records Division Director Jocelyn A. Morales, DFA-OCA Administrative Services Unit's Angelita Aguilar, DPWH Engineer Joselito P. Gonzales and DFA-OCA Assistant Secretary Renato A. Villapando. (photo by Tony Bosa Jr., DFA-PISU)



Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Romulo (center) with DFA officials and building contractor and owner John Kenneth L. Ocampo (second from left) at the inauguration of the new DFA OCA Building. The building was inaugurated on February 17, 2010.